

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 00224 100711Z

ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /013 W

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2120

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 0224

STADIS//////////

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, SREF, PORT, XE

SUBJECT: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES - CONSULTATIONS WITH AUSTRALIANS

REF: 77 STATE 298601

1. STATE 298601 REPORTED EXTENDED WASHINGTON MEETING WITH AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY COUNSELOR COTTRILL TO DISCUSS QUESTIONS ABOUT INDOCHINA REFUGEES POSED BY GOA. MFA FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY DUNCAN CAMPBELL (INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND CONSULAR AFFAIRS) DISCUSSED SAME SUBJECT AT LENGTH WITH US IN CANBERRA.

2. CAMPBELL HAS GIVEN US COPIES OF A PRELIMINARY WORKING PAPER (SENT SEPARATELY BY AIRGRAM) PREPARED BY DFA'S POLICY PLANNING SECTION WHICH ATTEMPTS TO DEFINE THE PROBLEM, ANTURE AND SCALE OF INDOCHINESE BOAT CASE REFUGEES AS AUSTRALIA SEES IT. DFA WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE U.S. COMMENTS ON AUSTRALIAN PAPER AND MATERIALS BEARING ON SAME PROBLEM.

3. WE UNDERSTAND CANBERRA EXPECTS TO SEND A SENIOR POLICY LEVEL FIGURE (PROBABLY FROM THE MINISTRY OF IMMIGRATION) FOR DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON DURING FEBRUARY ON BOAT CASE IMMIGRATION PROBLEMS. PRIOR TO THAT, DFA WOULD HOPE TO COMPARE NOTES WITH U.S.

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AUTHORITIES SO THAT FEBRUARY DISCUSSION COULD TAKE PLACE IN WASHINGTON ON BASIS OF COMMON, AND HOPEFULLY AGREED, UNDERSTANDING OF SITUATION AND OUTLOOK.

4. CAMPBELL MADE STRONG PITCH THAT HIS DFA SECTION AND THIS EMBASSY BE IN A POSITION TO TAKE A LEADING ROLE IN ONGOING CONSULTATIONS, IF POSSIBLE ON A PAR WITH THAT OF

AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY WASHINGTON AND U.S. AGENCIES THERE. HE RECOGNIZES THAT U.S. AGENCIES MIGHT PREFER TO DEAL IN WASHINGTON, BUT FOR VALID DOMESTIC AUSTRALIAN POLITICAL REASONS DFA WANTS TO INVOLVE DIRECTLY MINISTRY OF IMMIGRATION, WHICH WOULD BE BEST DONE IN CANBERRA.

5. WE BELIEVE CAMPBELL'S REQUEST HAS MERIT, AND ASK YOUR POSITIVE CONSIDERATION FOR GIVING EMBASSY CANBERRA ENHANCED ROLE IN BOAT CASE DISCUSSIONS WITH GOA.
SQUIRE

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